

# The Importance of Sleep



\*From the National Sleep Foundation:

| How Much Sleep Do You Really Need? |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Age                                | Sleep Needs   |
| Newborns (1-2 months)              | 10.5-18 hours   |
| Infants (3-11 months)              | 9-12 hours during night and 30-minute to two-hour naps, one to four times a day |
| Toddlers (1-3 years)               | 12-14 hours   |
| Preschoolers (3-5 years)           | 11-13 hours   |
| School-aged Children (5-12 years)  | 10-11 hours   |
| Teens (11-17)                      | 8.5-9.25 hours  |
| Adults                             | 7-9 hours   |
| Older Adults                       | 7-9 hours   |

Sleep is a vital need, essential to a child's health & growth. Sleep promotes alertness, memory, & performance. Children who get enough sleep are more likely to function better & are less prone to behavioral problems & moodiness. That is why it is important for parents to start early & help their children develop good sleep habits.

## \*Children Need & Thrive on Routine

The #1 tip for good sleeping habits in children is to follow a nightly routine. A bedtime ritual makes it easier for your child to relax, fall asleep, & sleep through the night.

### Typical Bedtime Routine

- Have a light snack
- Take a bath
- Put on pajamas
- Brush teeth
- Read a story
- Make sure the room is quiet & at a comfortable temperature
- Put your child to bed
- Say goodnight & leave the room

**\*Other Helpful Tips:**

1. Make bedtime the same every night.
2. Make bedtime a positive & relaxing experience without TV or videos.  
According to one recent study, TV viewing prior to bed can lead to difficulty falling & staying asleep. Save your child's favorite relaxing, non-stimulating activities until last & have them occur as part of your child's sleep routine.
3. Keep the bedtime environment (e.g. light, temperature) the same all night long.
4. Encourage children to fall asleep on their own.  
Have your child form positive associations with sleeping. A child should not need a parent to help him/her fall asleep. The child who falls asleep on his or her own will be better able to return to sleep during normal nighttime awakenings & sleep throughout the night.
5. Discourage nighttime awakenings  
When you go to your child's room every time he or she wakes during the night, you are strengthening the connection between you & sleep for your child. Except during conditions when the child is sick, had been injured or clearly requires your assistance, it is important to give your child a consistent message that they are expected to fall asleep on their own.

*Source: National Sleep Foundation*

[www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)



